

## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support



**Loni Hancock**

ASSEMBLYWOMAN, FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

July 1, 2003

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration Phase II

*ANN BURELL*

Dear Mr. Morabito:

As the California State Assembly representative for the region that includes the Baxter Creek Watershed, I strongly endorse and support the efforts of the City of El Cerrito and the Friends of Baxter Creek to enhance the "Baxter Creek Gateway" property. The opportunities for creek restoration, public access, and community outreach and education presented by this 1.64-acre parcel are valuable to the immediate watershed and the region at large.

Aspects of the proposed enhancements that we feel are important include:

- The restoration of a highly visible and currently degraded stretch of the urban Baxter Creek: restoration activities will improve water quality and riparian habitat while reducing effects of erosion and flooding.
- Extension of the Ohlone Greenway: The Ohlone Greenway, a regional multi-use trail ends immediately to the south of the gate property. The proposed activities will fill a gap by extending bicycle and pedestrian access to San Pablo Avenue. Through cooperation with the City of Richmond a crossing at San Pablo Avenue will enable a connection with Richmond's Central Greenway Trail that will enable users to reach the San Francisco Bay Trail. That the public access will be along Baxter Creek effectively knits a green ribbon of riparian habitat into the urban fabric and makes it accessible to all.
- The integration of maintenance and management into the designing of this project will ensure its success over the long run.

This project enjoys widespread support, as shown by the many partners who have worked on it for many years. We are particularly impressed with the level of public input and participation that has gone into the development of this project.

Please feel free to contact Betty Soskin, in my District Office (510/559-1406 x 20) for further information.

Sincerely,

*Loni Hancock*

LONI HANCOCK  
Assemblywoman

**COMMITTEES:**

BUDGET,  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
EDUCATION  
JUDICIARY  
LABOR & EMPLOYMENT  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
RULES

JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BRIDGING  
THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP, CHAIR

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support



### United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Pacific West Region  
Pacific Great Basin Support Office  
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Oakland, California 94607

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L6016(PGSO-PP)

August 11, 2003

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

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CITY OF EL CERRITO  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPT.

Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration Phase II

*ANN BUEHL*

Dear Mr. Morabito:

We appreciate the opportunity to express our support for the Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration and Trail Design Phase project. Over the past year the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program has provided technical assistance to the Friends of Baxter Creek and the City of El Cerrito as they worked with the community to refine a concept plan for the project.

Building on the early efforts of the Friends of Baxter Creek to save this site from development, the City of El Cerrito has demonstrated their commitment to the conscientious implementation of this urban creek restoration and greenway extension.

This project is important because it will help further regional goals in both non-motorized transportation linkages and restoration of remnant riparian habitats. The trail through this site will link the 7.5-mile Ohlone Greenway to the proposed Central Richmond Greenway, which will tie in to the 400-mile Bay Trail. The 650-foot creek restoration will bring multiple benefits including valuable native riparian habitat, improved local flood protection and increased public awareness of the need to care for the natural systems in the urban environment.

We look forward to continuing our work with the project partners as they enter the design and implementation phase of this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Peg Henderson  
Outdoor Recreation Planner

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support

**John Gioia**

Supervisor, District I  
Contra Costa County  
Board of Supervisors

Contra  
Costa  
County



11780 San Pablo Avenue Suite D  
El Cerrito, CA 94530  
Phone: (510) 374-3231  
Fax: (510) 374-3429

November 18, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612-4167

### Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration, Phase II

Dear Mr. Morabito:

I am writing in support of the efforts of the City of El Cerrito and the Friends of Baxter Creek (FOBC) to improve the Baxter Creek Gateway property. Continued funding and support are needed to realize the community's vision for the site. Once completed, this project will transform a neglected urban lot into a pocket park with a regional biking and pedestrian greenway adjacent to a restored Baxter Creek.

The Gateway site is located in the City of El Cerrito, in west Contra Costa County, on the busy San Pablo Avenue (California State Highway 123).

Development of this property into a community park will have three primary benefits.

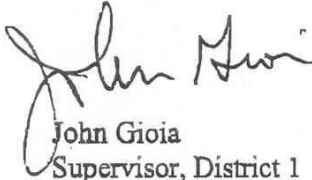
- 1) 650 feet of a currently channelized segment of Baxter Creek will be restored to a natural state, re-establishing habitat for wildlife, improving water quality, reducing flood potential, and providing a setting for educational lessons and community involvement.
- 2) The location of the property will link the existing 7.5 mile Ohlone Greenway with the proposed 2.5 mile Richmond Greenway. The trail will provide a valuable corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists commuting to and from the nearby BART train stations. Not only will the trail connection be a valued natural habitat in the East Bay, it will also provide many residents in low-income neighborhoods living near the proposed Baxter Creek segment of the greenway with a rare community treasure.
- 3) The project site is a very visible entrance into El Cerrito. The conversion of this site from an abandoned lot with shopping carts littering the creek to a 1.64 acre maintained, park-like open space with a functional, healthy creek and a regional Class 1 bike trail will demonstrate the value of restoring urban spaces. The project will also provide additional parklands for an area that is currently underserved. The adjacent community of Richmond is estimated to have a deficit of more than 50 acres of park acreage, according to City and County standard levels of open space.

## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support

For the reasons, I wholeheartedly support this project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

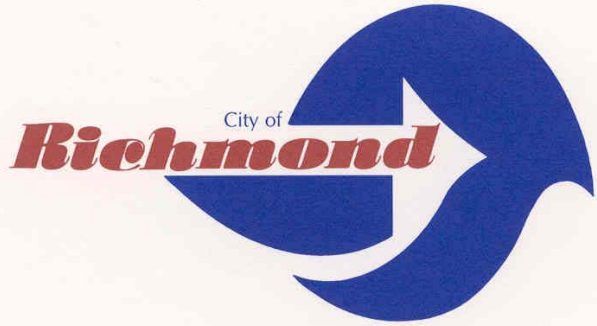
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Gioia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Gioia".

John Gioia  
Supervisor, District 1  
Contra Costa County



## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support

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CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

October 22, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chair  
c/o Ann Buell  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612-4167

Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration, Phase II

Dear Mr. Morabito:

The City of Richmond strongly supports the City of El Cerrito's interest in the above noted project. We are particularly interested in the extension of the Ohlone Greenway along the former railroad right-of-way adjacent to Baxter Creek. When completed, this Baxter Creek trail extension will connect to the proposed Central Richmond Greenway, a 2.5 mile rail corridor west of San Pablo, that the City of Richmond, and local groups, are planning on converting to a multi-use trail and greenway. The proposed Baxter Creek segment is necessary to connect the planned Central Richmond Greenway and the existing Ohlone Greenway.

Once these trails have been completed, the Central Richmond Greenway will connect the Del Norte Bart station to nearby residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, and downtown areas, providing a needed alternative to driving for Richmond residents. The Central Richmond Greenway will also connect the Ohlone Greenway with the Bay Trail, creating a regional recreational trail loop, which will provide benefits for all Bay Area residents. The trail system will not be complete without the Baxter Creek segment, and we look forward to working with the City of El Cerrito to develop a safe crossing at San Pablo for trail users.

The proposed creek restoration and park at the Gateway site will be an amenity for nearby Richmond residents, and the educational signage on how to reduce pollutants flowing to the creek will reach many Richmond residents, assisting the City in meeting its clean water requirements. The opportunities for creek restoration, public access, and community outreach and education presented by this 1.64-acre parcel are valuable to the immediate watershed and the region at large.

Please feel free to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Jay Corey  
Assistant City Manager

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NOV 12 2003

COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

1401 MARINA WAY SOUTH, P.O. BOX 4046, RICHMOND, CA 94804

Telephone: (510) 620-6512  
Fax: (510) 620-6542

**EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support**

**URBAN CREEKS COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA**



October 30, 2003

*A. Buell*

Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Phase II

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

Dear Mr. Morabito:

The Urban Creeks Council of California strongly supports the Gateway Project.

This project will enable the City of El Cerrito to restore 650 linear feet of Baxter Creek, building on prior Conservancy funded efforts, such as the purchase of the Gateway property in winter 2003, and the Urban Creeks Council's restoration of Baxter Creek at Booker T. Anderson Park in Richmond. It also builds upon years of effort and interest by the Friends of Baxter Creek, a highly successful citizens group, to educate the community about the value of urban streams as a public resource.

In addition, through this project, the City of El Cerrito will complete a critical link in an important regional bike trail, connecting the Ohlone Greenway to the Richmond Central Greenway, which in turn will connect to the SF Bay Trail. The Gateway project, located in the well-populated urban flatlands of El Cerrito at the Richmond border, offers enormous educational and recreational benefits to the public. It also presents a huge opportunity to restore riparian habitat for birds and wildlife. In the past 200 years California has lost approximately 95 percent of its riparian vegetation, resulting in fragmented and often degraded habitat. This loss is perhaps magnified in the San Francisco Bay Area, which was recently identified as one of the six biodiversity hotspots in the world (Nature Conservancy, 2000). Restoration of even "small" riparian patches in urban settings is critical for migratory songbirds and other wildlife.

We encourage support of this important project that will benefit both humans and wildlife. Please feel free to contact me for further information at 510- 540-6669.

Sincerely,

Steve Donnelly  
Executive Director  
Urban Creeks Council

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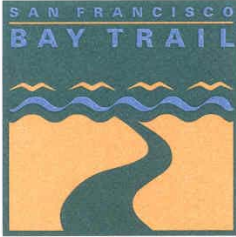
NOV 06 2003

COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

cc – Heather N. Koch  
City of El Cerrito



## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support



July 15, 2003

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612-2530  
*ANN BUELL*

Dear Mr. Morabito:

The San Francisco Bay Trail Project supports the efforts of the City of El Cerrito and the Friends of Baxter Creek's to improve the "Baxter Creek Gateway" property. The opportunities for creek restoration, public access, and community outreach and education presented by this 1.64-acre parcel are valuable to the immediate watershed and the region at large.

The San Francisco Bay Trail Project is an organization administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) that coordinates implementation of the San Francisco Bay Trail. When complete, the Bay Trail will be a continuous 400-mile network of bicycling and hiking paths that will encircle San Francisco and San Pablo bays in their entirety. It will link the shoreline of all nine Bay Area counties, passing through 47 cities, and will cross seven of the eight toll bridges in the region. To date, slightly more than half the length of the proposed system has been developed.

Aspects of the proposed project that we feel are important include:

- Connectivity between regional trail systems. Constructing a crossing of San Pablo Avenue, and a public access corridor along Baxter Creek, will connect the Central Richmond Greenway, the San Francisco Bay Trail, and the Ohlone Greenway. Connectivity dramatically increases the destinations that a user of any of the three systems will have.
- The restoration of a highly-visible and currently degraded stretch of urban Baxter Creek will improve water quality and riparian habitat while reducing effects of erosion and flooding.
- The integration of maintenance and management into the design of this project will ensure its success over the long run.

The Bay Trail Project has been impressed with the level of public input and participation that has gone into the development of this project, and note that it enjoys widespread support. Please feel free to contact me for further information at (510) 464-7915.

Sincerely,

*David Lipsetz*  
David Lipsetz  
Bay Trail Planner

*CC: Ann Buell*

Administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments  
P.O. Box 2050 • Oakland California 94604-2050  
Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter • 101 Eighth Street • Oakland California 94607-4756  
Phone: 510-464-7935  
Fax: 510-464-7970

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OAKLAND, CALIF.

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## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support



## Sustainable El Cerrito

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July 15, 2003

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

*A. Buell*

Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration Phase II

Dear Mr. Morabito:

On behalf of Sustainable El Cerrito, I am pleased to support the efforts of the City of El Cerrito and the Friends of Baxter Creek to improve the "Baxter Creek Gateway" property. Sustainable El Cerrito is a citizen group concerned with improving the quality of life for all El Cerrito residents. We believe that El Cerrito has great potential to become a thriving, beautiful, safe, economically healthy community. We define sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; the proposed activities at Baxter Creek and the Ohlone Greenway resonate with this value.

Fundamental to Sustainable El Cerrito's vision for the City of El Cerrito is the integration of bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, the expansion of open spaces, and the integration and restoration of natural elements into the urban fabric. The proposed creek restoration and trail development activities at this vacant and underutilized, but highly visible, urban property directly relate to our goals; the process that has been established to involve local residents speaks to our value of a public participation process that educates and involves local residents. We look forward to the progress of the Baxter Creek Gateway project and hope you find it as worthwhile as we do.

Please feel free to contact me for further information at (510) 232-6466.

Sincerely,

*Lori Dair*

Lori Dair  
Sustainable El Cerrito

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OCT 30 2003

COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.



## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support



# Aquatic Outreach Institute

November 4, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612-4167

155 Richmond Field Station  
1327 South 46th Street  
Richmond, CA 94804  
(510) 231-5655 phone  
(510) 231-5703 fax  
[www.aoinstitute.org](http://www.aoinstitute.org)

Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration, Phase II

*ANN BOELL*

Dear Mr. Morabito:

I am writing on behalf of the Aquatic Outreach Institute (AOI) in support of the efforts of the City of El Cerrito and the Friends of Baxter Creek to enhance the Baxter Creek Gateway property. The opportunities for creek restoration, public access, and community outreach and education presented by this 1.64-acre parcel are valuable to the local community and the region at large.

Founded in 1997, AOI develops and implements education and community stewardship programs about water resources within the San Francisco Bay Area. This is partly accomplished through fostering the development of strong community groups that advocate for, and take direct action in, stewardship of local creeks. In this role, AOI has provided coordination assistance to the community creek group Friends of Baxter Creek (FOBC) since 2000.

The City of El Cerrito and the Friends of Baxter Creek, with support from AOI, wrote a successful grant proposal to the California State Coastal Conservancy for purchase of the 1.64 acre Baxter Creek Gateway property, through which the creek flows. The City received funding, and purchased the property in winter 2003. Following the purchase, the City and FOBC coordinated a community design workshop, to solicit input on how to turn the area into an open space amenity for the local community. A conceptual plan was developed for the property based on this workshop.

The proposed park is desirable for three primary reasons: (1) It provides the opportunity to link the end of the 7.5 mile Ohlone Greenway and the beginning of the proposed Central Richmond Greenway by extending the Ohlone Greenway along the western side of Baxter Creek; (2) Baxter Creek has been channelized within this property, but will be restored to its natural state, affording benefits for wildlife, improving water quality, reducing flood potential, and providing a setting for educational lessons and community involvement; and, (3) The park will create much-needed green space in a highly urbanized section of El Cerrito. The project site is in a very visible location in the City, and the transformation of the site from an abandoned lot with shopping carts in the creek to a maintained, park-like space will demonstrate the value of restoring open spaces.

AOI is committed to a continued partnership with FOBC and the city to realize the vision for the Gateway Park, including coordinating volunteer participation in the planning and implementation of this project; in 2002, FOBC members donated over 960 hours to restoration projects in the Baxter Creek watershed. AOI encourages the support of this project. If you have any questions, please call me at (510) 231-9507.

Sincerely,

Sharon Farrell  
Executive Director

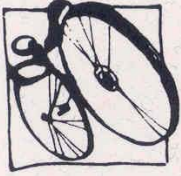
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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.



**EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support**



**EAST BAY BICYCLE COALITION**

POST OFFICE BOX 1736 OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94604

www.ebbc.org

November 6, 2003

Mr. Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612-2530

*ANN BURKH*

**Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration Phase II**

Dear Mr. Morabito:

The East Bay Bicycle Coalition (EBBC) supports the City of El Cerrito's grant application for the Baxter Creek Gateway project. Founded in 1972, the EBBC has advocated for improvements like the Ohlone Trail, the Bay Trail and access to transit for bicyclists throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

The proposed project represents an opportunity to extend the Ohlone Greenway, created by the City of El Cerrito's acquisition of a crucial piece of right-of-way. This popular multiuse path connects many neighborhoods in multiple jurisdictions with three BART stations and is therefore an important regional bikeway. The proximity of the site to the Del Norte BART station and its eventual connection with the Richmond Greenway make this project a key linkage for a significant connector trail that will certainly be used for commuters and recreational cyclists alike.

Rarely do we have the opportunity to promote such an important intersection of cost-effective bikeways as Baxter Creek promises to provide.

Please feel free to contact me for further information or photos of the site.

Sincerely,

Robert Raburn  
Executive Director  
(510) 530-3444

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NOV 07 2003

COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF

***TO PROMOTE BICYCLING AS AN EVERYDAY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION***



## EXHIBIT 5: Letters of Support

A. Bunt

# Friends of Five Creeks

*Preserving and restoring  
creeks and watersheds of  
North Berkeley, Albany,  
Kensington, and El Cerrito*

1236 Oxford St. Berkeley, CA 94709 510 848 9358 [f5creeks@aol.com](mailto:f5creeks@aol.com) [www.fivecreeks.org](http://www.fivecreeks.org)

November 3, 2003

Paul Morabito, Chair  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612-4167

Re: Baxter Creek Gateway Restoration, Phase II

Dear Mr. Morabito:

On behalf of the Friends of Five Creeks, a local citizens group that preserves and restores creeks and watersheds in North Berkeley, Albany, Kensington, and south El Cerrito, I urge your support of efforts to enhance the Baxter Creek gateway on the border of El Cerrito and Richmond. This 1.64-acre parcel offers opportunities for creek restoration, public access, and community outreach and education that are disproportionate to its size.

This project, sponsored by the City of El Cerrito and sought for many years by our sister volunteer group, Friends of Baxter Creek, offers opportunities for the following:

- The restoration of a highly visible and currently degraded stretch of urban Baxter Creek, a creek that again, while small, is highly visible and has been successfully restored in nearby urban parks including Poinsett, Mira Vista, and Booker T. Anderson.
- Improvements to water quality and riparian habitat
- Reduction of erosion and flooding.
- Extension of the Ohlone Greenway, a regional multi-use trail from Berkeley to Richmond, that now ends just south of the property. The proposed activities will extend bicycle and pedestrian access to San Pablo Avenue. Through cooperation with the City of Richmond, a crossing at San Pablo Avenue will enable a connection with Richmond's Central Greenway trail, enabling users to reach the San Francisco Bay Trail.
- Carrying out the Joint Watershed Goals policy, established by the cities of Richmond, El Cerrito, Albany, and Berkeley in 1995, calling for creekside greenways.
- Design that will include plans for low-cost maintenance and management.

This project enjoys widespread support, as shown by the many partners and members of the public who have worked on it for many years. For further information, please contact me at the address, phone, or email on the letterhead.

Sincerely,



Susan Schwartz  
President, Friends of Five Creeks

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.